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DE RUEHQT #2148 2371847
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 251847Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5118
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE 5913
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 0903
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG 0041
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 3643
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 1965
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0628
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL IMMEDIATE 1035
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

UNCLAS QUITO 002148

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [SNAR](#) [PTER](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN SHOTS LEAVE ECUADORIANS WOUNDED

¶1. (SBU) Colombian military units and FARC rebels exchanged heavy gunfire late in the evening on August 23 in the southern Colombian border town of Teteye, Putumayo. Ecuadorian 19th Jungle Brigade Commander (based in Lago Agrio, Sucumbios province) Colonel Ramiro Caceres confirmed the live fire incident to an Embassy official, reporting that a mortar round exploded in the Ecuadorian town of Puerto Nuevo, Sucumbios at 5 a.m. on August 24. The device detonated in the Puerto Nuevo bus station, injuring three Ecuadorians, one severely, COL Caceres said.

¶2. (U) Minister of Defense Oswaldo Jarrin traveled to the Puerto Nuevo on August 24 to survey damage first hand. In an August 25 interview, Jarrin confirmed the incident calling it unfortunate. He said that the Colombian military must exercise greater caution when operating along the joint border, something the two governments had agreed upon in bilateral meetings. Responding to the reporter's suggestion that diplomatic efforts were futile, Jarrin recalled that six months had passed without a significant incident, proving that increased bilateral communication has worked. He said that the Foreign Ministry would formally protest the incident and seek compensation for victims through the Colombian Embassy in Quito.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The GOE seems willing to downplay the incident, absent public or political uproar. A forthcoming and contrite response from the GOC would help keep the reaction here at manageable levels.
JEWELL